

would need to tell the Congress," said ABC News consultant Richard Clarke, a former White House counterterrorism official.

Current and former intelligence officials say the approval of the covert action means the Bush administration, for the time being, has decided not to pursue a military option against Iran.

Vice President Cheney helped to lead the side favoring a military strike," said former CIA official Riedel, "but I think they have come to the conclusion that a military strike has more downsides than upsides."

The covert action plan comes as U.S. officials have confirmed Iran had dramatically increased its ability to produce nuclear weapons material, at a pace that experts said would give them the ability to build a nuclear bomb in two years.

Riedel says economic pressure on Iran may be the most effective tool available to the CIA, particularly in going after secret accounts used to fund the nuclear program.

"The kind of dealings that the Iranian Revolution Guards are going to do, in terms of purchasing nuclear and missile components, are likely to be extremely secret, and you're going to have to work very, very hard to find them, and that's exactly the kind of thing the CIA's nonproliferation center and others would be expert at trying to look into," Riedel said.

Under the law, the CIA needs an official presidential finding to carry out such covert actions. The CIA is permitted to mount covert "collection" operations without a presidential finding.

"Presidential findings" are kept secret but reported to the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence and other key congressional leaders.

The "nonlethal" aspect of the presidential finding means CIA officers may not use deadly force in carrying out the secret operations against Iran.

Still, some fear that even a nonlethal covert CIA program carries great risks. "I think everybody in the region knows that there is a proxy war already afoot with the United States supporting anti-Iranian elements in the region as well as opposition groups within Iran," said Vali Nasr, adjunct senior fellow for Mideast studies at the Council on Foreign Relations. "And this covert action is now being escalated by the new U.S. directive, and that can very quickly lead to Iranian retaliation and a cycle of escalation can follow," Nasr said. Other "lethal" findings have authorized CIA covert actions against al Qaeda, terrorism and nuclear proliferation.

Also briefed on the CIA proposal, according to intelligence sources, were National Security Advisor Steve Hadley and Deputy National Security Advisor Elliott Abrams. "The entire plan has been blessed by Abrams, in particular," said one intelligence source familiar with the plan. "And Hadley had to put his chop on it."

Abrams' last involvement with attempting to destabilize a foreign government led to criminal charges. He pleaded guilty in October 1991 to two misdemeanor counts of withholding information from Congress about the Reagan administration's ill-fated efforts to destabilize the Nicaraguan Sandinista government in Central America, known as the IranContra affair. Abrams was later pardoned by President George H. W. Bush in December 1992.

In June 2001, Abrams was named by then National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice to head the National Security Council's office for democracy, human rights and international operations. On Feb. 2, 2005, National Security Advisor Hadley appointed Abrams deputy assistant to the president and deputy

national security advisor for global democracy strategy, one of the nation's most senior national security positions.

As earlier reported on the Blotter on ABCNews.com, the United States has supported and encouraged an Iranian militant group, Jundullah, that has conducted deadly raids inside Iran from bases on the rugged Iran-Pakistan-Afghanistan "tri-border region."

U.S. officials deny any "direct funding" of Jundullah groups but say the leader of Jundullah was in regular contact with U.S. officials.

American intelligence sources say Jundullah has received money and weapons through the Afghanistan and Pakistan military and Pakistan's intelligence service. Pakistan has officially denied any connection.

A report broadcast on Iranian TV last Sunday said Iranian authorities had captured 10 men crossing the border with \$500,000 in cash along with "maps of sensitive areas" and "modern spy equipment." A senior Pakistani official told ABCNews.com the 10 men were members of Jundullah.

The leader of the Jundullah group, according to the Pakistani official, has been recruiting and training "hundreds of men" for "unspecified missions" across the border in Iran.

We are back in 1953, and it worked so well then. Of course, the Vice President wanted to invade Iran, so we can be sure he will spin new tales of fear in coming days to keep his preferred option, invasion, by land or by air, very much alive. The President knows only one way: My way or the highway. His Vice President knows only one way: Invade and seize control of what you want. And he wants the oil treasure of Iraq and Iran to become wholly owned subsidiaries of the Western oil companies he favors.

With Iraq in civil war, the President has authorized a secret plan to repeat the doomed mistakes of history in Iran. How many billion dollars of reconstruction money from Iraq will be siphoned off to deconstruct Iran?

The American people are virtually shouting at us to pay attention and get our soldiers out of Iraq now. Vast sums of U.S. money are flowing into Iraq, and billions of U.S. dollars are missing. The Special Investigator for Iraq Reconstruction told a San Antonio newspaper last week that corruption in Iraq is endemic and debilitating.

But Prime Minister Maliki has granted Ministers and former Ministers immunity from prosecution by Iraq's Commission of Public Integrity, and, in turn, the Ministers can shield their own employees from prosecution, a government that has been told by this President and Vice President to pass an oil law that transfers control and profits to Western oil companies, just like the good old days in Iran. Overthrowing Iran in 1953 was all about oil. Invading Iraq was all about oil, and the new secret plot against Iran is all about oil.

Oil is the only benchmark this President and Vice President want, and they will keep American soldiers fighting and dying until an oil law is passed in Iraq that gives Western oil companies

total control of the spigot and the profits. It's time to unmask the latest doomed plot to overthrow Iran, and it is past time to get our soldiers out of Iraq.

Nothing less than protecting our troops is acceptable.

NIGHT LIFE IN SALT LAKE CITY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Utah (Mr. BISHOP) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Mr. Speaker, almost a fortnight ago, one of our colleagues, the gentleman from Massachusetts, was waxing eloquent about congressional experts, which he considered to be an oxymoron, as he said, similar to jumbo shrimp or Salt Lake City night life.

I have the opportunity of representing the central and western side of Salt Lake City, along with my colleague, who hopefully will be here later, who lives in and represents the east side of Salt Lake City, Mr. MATHESSON. Now, it's true I don't live in Salt Lake City. I live in a much quieter area 60 miles north of a town appropriately called Brigham City. But in my younger, wilder college days, I did live in areas that I now represent in Central City and Capitol Hill in Salt Lake, an area similar to this except about 4,000 feet closer to the heavens.

I want you to know in the night life, every evening when you went out, on almost every corner you could find an ice cream parlor. If I ever wanted to forget my worries and drown my sorrows, I could easily have a second glass of warm milk. There are some nights we put our pajamas on before 8:00, the one without the feet. Even now we will occasionally stay up long enough to watch Letterman go through his top 10. Our night life, and he says there is no night life, when we wanted to go out at night, we would take off the working Wranglers, put on the clean Wranglers and go down to 7-Eleven and find the new Slurpee flavors of the month.

For a gourmet night, we could even load up the minivan and supersize number 5 with extra mayo, for everyone except for the driver, because we don't allow drinking and driving. That's why some of our cabbies die of thirst. And you say we have no night life?

It's true our happy hours are determined by how much green Jell-O is available, because a party is not a party without green Jell-O and carrot bits. Indeed, if you order a mixed drink, it will definitely involve chocolate syrup and milk, but you still have to stir vigorously with the straw. And he says we have no night life?

Our baseball fans, after the seventh inning, can order all the root beer they want. Admittedly, it causes road rage. I remember the last time I came out when my buggy was cut off by a buckboard wagon, and I have to admit, I said some expletives, like, oh my,

heck, move that frigging nag. But to say we have no night life?

Now, lest any other myths continue on here, I do want to tell the gentleman from Massachusetts, if he wants to see Tony Award-winning regional drama, he will have to come to Utah, and he will fly into one of the busiest hubs in the Nation, which is Salt Lake International.

If he finds himself seated at Pioneer Memorial Theater or Kingsbury Hall or Rose Wagner Theater, Capitol Theater, he will be seeing Broadway-quality plays all done by equity actors, or he will be listening to some of the finest music done by the Utah Opera Company or the premiere ballet of the West, which is Ballet West, which is headquartered in Utah, or watching the award-winning Repertory Dance Theater.

If he finds himself in Abravanel Hall, he will be listening to one of the best symphony orchestras in the Nation. If he is at Franklin Covey Field, he will watch the sun shine on the eastern mountains in the Wasatch over the left field berm as he sits in probably what has been considered one of the nicest and most beautiful baseball stadiums, watching the AAA-Division-leading Salt Lake Bees. He can find private clubs and dance clubs and comedy clubs and concerts and even, although I don't recommend it, get drunk in Salt Lake City.

□ 1915

He might even be able to listen to a debate between a publicity-seeking mayor and a radio talk show host about Iraq, in which case he would probably want to be drunk. It may just have been under those night lights that he didn't see much going on; that it was one of the nights when the Utah Jazz, even though they have had two rough difficult nights, were still involved in the hunt for the NBA title, something which a team in his State can't say.

In short, I would simply recommend and invite the good gentleman from Massachusetts to come and visit our State. I would suggest, perhaps, though, he should bring an interpreter with him, because in Utah we still do not put an R at the end of our vowels.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HALL of New York). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. PETERSON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. PETERSON of Pennsylvania addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

DEAMONTE'S LAW

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. CUMMINGS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to announce that I have intro-

duced Deamonte's Law, a bill to establish a dental home for every American child by increasing dental services in the community health centers and training more individuals in pediatric dentistry.

The legislation is named for Deamonte Driver, a 12-year-old Maryland boy who died on February 25, 2007 when a tooth infection spread to his brain. A routine dental checkup might have saved his life, but Deamonte was poor and homeless and he did not have access to a dentist.

When I learned of this senseless tragedy, I was deeply shaken. I simply cannot comprehend how in this country, where we have sent men to the Moon, we let a little boy's teeth rot so badly that his infection became fatal.

I often say that as adults we have a responsibility to provide for and to protect our children, and we failed miserably to meet that responsibility for little Deamonte. I think we all should be ashamed by that fact. I know I am.

That is why I have made a commitment to addressing this issue from every single angle. I knew that if Deamonte was suffering in my home State of Maryland, other little boys and girls like him were probably also suffering.

To be clear, Deamonte's case was rare and extreme. However, even the most casual investigation reveals that children across this great Nation are living with painful, untreated tooth decay, many of them dangerously close to acquiring life-threatening infections.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports that tooth decay in baby teeth has increased 15 percent among United States toddlers and preschoolers 2 years old to 5 years old between 1988 to 1994, and 1994 to 2004. Tooth decay is the single most common childhood chronic disease, and it disproportionately affects poor and minority children. Eighty percent of dental decay occurs in just 25 percent of children, and parents are three times more likely to report that their children's dental needs are unmet when compared to the general medical care needs.

A silent epidemic of dental disease is plaguing our children, and our inability to address this issue has simply been horrifying. That is why I have introduced Deamonte's Law, which would address two critical factors contributing to the inability of children like Deamonte to access a dentist.

Deamonte's Law would ensure that children like Deamonte have access to dental services in communities where they live. Community health centers provide a health safety net to underserved areas, such as rural and urban communities. However, an estimated 42 percent have gaps in their capacity to provide dental care. Deamonte's Law would address this issue by establishing a 5-year, \$5 million pilot program to provide funds for dentists, equipment, and construction for dental

services at community health centers. The program would also provide support for contractual relationships between centers and private practice dentists.

Deamonte's Law would also address the dentist shortage. The United States Department of Health and Human Services estimates that there is a shortage of 4,650 dentists, and pediatric dentists are even more scarce. Deamonte's Law would address this issue by establishing a 5-year, \$5 million pilot program to enhance training and academic programs in pediatric dentistry, recruit and train dentists to study pediatrics, and provide continuing education for practicing dentists.

The legislation is endorsed by the American Dental Association. I was joined in introducing this legislation by my good friend, Chairman HENRY WAXMAN of California, and Subcommittee Chairman DENNIS KUCINICH of Ohio. I want to thank both Congressmen for their leadership and dedication to this issue.

On May 2, 2007, at my request, we conducted an oversight hearing entitled "Evaluating Pediatric Dental Care under Medicaid to Investigate Deamonte Driver's Death." At the hearing, it became apparent that the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services has categorically failed to meet its oversight responsibility with regards to ensuring the State health departments and the managed care organizations that they contract with are in compliance with the law.

Section 1905(r)(3) of the Social Security Act ensures that every Medicaid-eligible child will have access to medically necessary dental care under the early and periodic screening, diagnostic, and treatment provision. However, it is evident from our investigation that this has not been the case, and so I urge my colleagues to join in sponsoring this legislation.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. DAVIS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. DAVIS of Kentucky addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

PREFERENCE POLICY PLAN FOR ILLEGALS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, the Senate's new repackaged immigration proposal, the "Give America Away Act," has a provision that should be of concern to college students and parents who foot the bill for college. It gives the illegals in the United States a better deal than U.S. citizens or legal immigrants when it comes to the cost of college tuition for State universities.